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LYNCH'S
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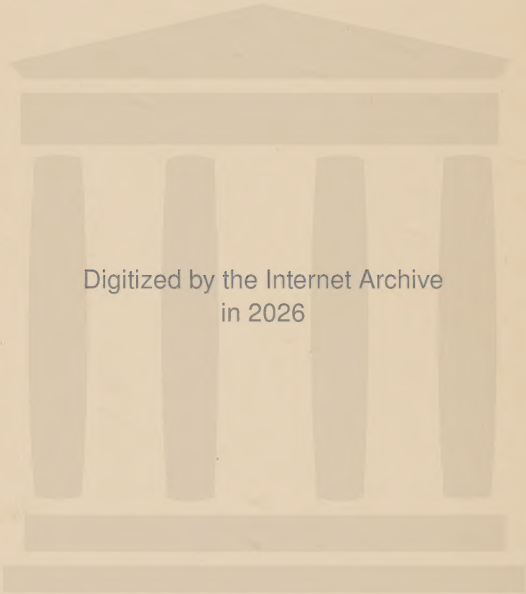
OF
TRAPPING

INCLUDING PROVEN FORMULAS FOR BAITS AND SCENTS

ILLUSTRATED



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LYNCH'S SCIENTIFIC METHODS OF TRAPPING

Including proven formulae for baits and scents

Illustrated

By V. E. Lynch
Ashland, Maine

Mr. Paul J. Shea
Swanton,

Revised Edition
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A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I WAS born in the Ozark Mountains, September 5, 1884. At the age of nine the first intimation of what my future would be was given me and I started on the trap line.

I was so small I could not set a No. 2 trap. My mother would set it for me and I would carry it to the woods, set and place it. When I made a catch it had to be carried back for her to reset until I was old enough to do it myself.

At the age of sixteen I was going strong on a long line and studying hard to learn all the habits and nature of all the fur-bearing animals. I was experimenting with all kinds of scents for each. My efforts were rewarded with immediate success. When coming on to the age of eighteen I was considered by all who knew me as the best fox and wolf trapper of the middle west. The old-time trappers of the Ozark hills who were following the trail of the trap-line many years before I was born

would marvel at seeing me return with a week's catch of furs. I had invented a scent for the fox and timber wolf that was a winner. I had also learned a method of preparing land sets, that seldom a fox or wolf got by. The craving for big game and adventure took me into Texas along the Rio Grande and in Old Mexico where, in a few seasons, won fame as a successful hunter and trapper. The coyotes, mountain lions, and bob cats suffered a heavy toll. Then more of the same in several western states. As the fox advanced in price I crossed the continent to Northern Maine, where I found red fox and an abundance of them, and for the past ten years I have been making them yield a royal annual tribute of pelts for the market. I have caught as high as ten foxes in one night on snow, and for many years I have never met a trapper that could show me any points on taking this cunning old lad.

In 1925 the *National Sportsman* magazine employed me as Editor of the Trapping Department. After I had written a few articles I received hundreds of letters from trappers and amateurs from all parts of the United

States and Alaska seeking information in regard to scents and trapping methods.

In order to help the thousands of my brother trappers reach their goal I am writing this book which contains the most scientific methods of making sets and preparing scents for all the fur bearers. I am giving in brief form the habits and nature of each fur bearer.

If the young trapper had to dope out and learn from experience the secrets and information this book contains he would be so advanced in years before he learned it that he could not walk to follow a trap line.

Now if you carefully make your scents according to direction and study the book, you will be well upon the road to being a successful trapper.

Here's luck along the trap-line in future seasons.

V. E. Lynch,
the Author.

Ivy cuckoo returning with a big load of fish

CHAPTER I

Wolves

WE have two species of wolves in the United States, the timber wolf, and the coyote or prairie wolf. The coyote is a western animal, although he is claimed to have been killed as far east as New York. The prairies and deserts are his favorite homes. He is found in almost every state from the Mississippi River to the Pacific coast. His favorite localities are on the sheep and cattle ranges.

A western trapper starting out to cruise for coyotes will head into the big cattle ranges to look for their signs, or into a sheep country. Many cattle die of black leg or other diseases and the coyotes feed from the carcass. Two or three coyotes together will kill a young calf. But here let me warn you. When you find a dead cow and the coyotes are working

on her, or a calf, sheep, or pig that has fallen victim to the coyote, never go near it. This is the last place to try to catch the coyote.

There may be several coyotes working around any of the above mentioned baits, and you want to keep them around that section until you get them all. If you should go up to the carcass, track around it and make sets around the bait, you are very apt to drive all coyotes away for some time, and you will find yourself looking for a place to trap wolves a few days later.

I am not saying that it is impossible to trap coyotes at the carcass as I have caught a few there, in cases where nothing disturbed the sets until the coyote got up courage enough to venture back for another feed.

In most every case skunks or other small animals will get into the trap and the coyotes will leave the place and find food in some other locality.

A good wolf trapper will always in every case keep away from a bait carcass or kill when he finds it. The wolf will eat almost any kind of meat. Poultry is a great favorite. I have often seen where the wolf had run a

rabbit into a hole, and dug him out and feasted on him.

He is a great rambler, on the go most of the time. Very seldom does he have a den. He just lies down on the ground or snow when he wants a rest. The female has a den of some kind when she has her young. They mate in the months of January and February. The period of gestation is nine weeks, sixty-three days. It is the same with the timber wolf. The young ones are suckled about two and one-half months, and then the mother wolf will carry grub to them. I have located their dens after they had become a fairly good size and there would be bones and feathers around the mouth of the den.

For trap I use number 3 Newhouse for the coyote and a number 4 Newhouse for the timber wolf. A number 3 Newhouse will hold the largest timber wolf that roams the forest.

The Victor is also considered a good trap and has some advantages over the Newhouse. Can be set across your knee with your hands, whereas you have to get on the spring with your feet to set the Newhouse. Of course the Newhouse will far outlast the Victor, but you

have to pay more than as much again for it.

The coyote is classed as one of the most cunning animals to trap. But for the writer the wolf as well as the fox is one of the easiest fur-bearers that there is to trap once you learn all the tricks in the game. I will agree with all that the wolf is a very cunning animal to deal with. He has almost human intelligence. To trap him requires both science and skill. His sense of sight, smell and hearing is marvelous, and on top of this he is possessed with an instinctive caution which very seldom fails him when the amateur is trying to snap a trap on his foot.

As all you trappers who have tried to trap him know he has one great weakness — "curiosity." Now we must have something to arouse this curiosity. I have warned and cautioned you not to go near a dead carcass that wolves have been working on. You must have some scent.

One of the scents that I use with great success is as follows: Catch a female wolf while in heat, which will be in January or February, cut out the uterus, bladder and also vent, put in a quart bottle that has been washed out

with lye from hardwood ashes. Let the lye stand in the bottle over night to cleanse the bottle of any other scent. Rinse well with clean water. After the ingredients from the wolf have been put into the bottle add some water. Put in a piece of asafetida, about the size of the end of your little finger, and two drops of oil of anise. I have got good results from this when it was even a year old. In using this use only a few drops.

If the above-mentioned scent cannot be gotten, kill a skunk, cut the fat up into small pieces, put into a clean jar, and hang out in the sun until it turns to oil. Then add several muskrats' musksacs, one-half of a beaver caster, a small piece of asafetida, vent and urine from two or more wolves, the female preferred.

These are the best scents that can be made, but with either of the above receipts the amateur trapper cannot trap the wolf if he does not know how to rid his trap of human or steel odors, to make a proper set, and how to place his trap so the wolf will step in it when he comes to smell of the scent. There are many trappers under the impression that there

are some kind of secret scents made by the expert wolfer, that the wolf will get so excited over, that he will run up and step in a trap whether it is properly concealed or not and regardless of steel or human odor. But this is not true. The above mentioned scents are the best that can be made, but your trap must be odorless. You must use every precaution to keep off human odor and human signs.

Your sets must look as natural after it is completed as it did before you began. Remember the animal you are now dealing with has almost human intelligence and can and *does* reason.

The wolf loves to travel cow-trails. He will sometimes get into them and travel for a long distance. Here a trail-set can be made, and an amateur or beginner is more apt to get his wolf this way than by using bait or scent. The wolf is not suspecting danger. He knows that cattle, horses and man travel these trails.

In making a trail-set, bait or scent should never be used. If you are not an expert at the game, you are sure to leave some human odor or signs of your set and when the wolf ap-

proaches the bait he is very apt to stop and look for signs of the trapper.

In making a trail-set you should find a trail in which there is loose sand, dust or dry dirt. Dig out a hole so that the trap will lie just a little below the surface. Then cover with a layer of large flat leaves, letting them lap from jaw to pan until the trap is all covered. Use thin paper if the leaves cannot be gotten, then take up the dirt between your hands and sift a light coat of it over the trap. In doing this you must have on a clean pair of woolen mittens or gloves. Your trap should be odorless.

Now if you are using only one trap for this set you should place it where the wolf steps over a stick, or place one across the trail. Set your trap on one side of it, have it in a place where there are pebbles or a bunch of cactus, say about eighteen inches beyond so if the wolf comes from that side he will step over all, just clear the stick or twig and will hit your trap; and should he come the other way he will step as near the stepping stick as possible so as to step to good footing beyond.

Now don't go and chop down a green tree with an ax to use for the stepping stick. You must make this look natural. Pick up an old dead twig or stick alongside the trail and fix it as if it had been knocked in by the cattle. If you can find no suitable place to make a stepping stick you had better use two traps as he is not so apt to get by without hitting one of them.

Now to fasten your trap. It is very difficult to find suitable logs lying just where you want to make your set. You must not put anything there for you don't want to make any disturbance or changes in the surroundings where your set is to be made. So about the only thing to do is to stake it solid. Fasten your chain near the top of your stake and drive it in the side of the trail two or three inches below the surface so that everything is concealed, stake, chain and trap. If you are using two or three traps they can all be fastened to the one stake.

You will be bothered by the cattle springing your trap in these trails and should go over your line quite often and reset the ones sprung. Smaller animals are also liable to be

caught in them. You will have lots of ups and downs with these sets but it is the surest way for the inexperienced to catch the cunning old wolf.

I do not use this method. I use scent only and I catch about every wolf or coyote that comes within smelling distance of my trap. If you make your scent according to the directions I have given and cannot catch them it is your fault in making the set. The traps used should at all times be clean and odorless, and kept free from rust.

The following is the method I have used with much success. First remove all the rust, then boil in strong hardwood ashes or lye from the same, or let soak over night without boiling. This frees your trap from everything—blood from animals previously caught in them or human odor, tobacco smoke that would settle on them from being in a camp where some one had been smoking. After taking them from the lye or ashes they should be thoroughly washed in running water and boiled for twenty minutes in strong tea from balsam boughs and bark or hemlock. This will leave your trap so that it won't corrode

or rust for several days and the wolf, coyote, or fox won't be suspicious of the smell.

When a trap begins to rust it throws off a strong odor that even a human being can detect. If you are trapping in a country where fur or hemlock does not grow something else should be used. If you are trapping in the prairie, sage brush can be used.

After your traps are clean and prepared they should not be touched again with your naked hands or put into your cabin. They should be left outside until they are set. Woolen gloves should be used for making your sets. These gloves should be boiled in the tea from the hemlock or whatever you may be using, and once they are prepared they should never be taken into your cabin or used for any other purpose. In making your set never grab your ax handle with your gloves if you have recently been using it with your naked hand. Should you do so your gloves will be scented with human odor.

It is these many small things that the amateur is sure to overlook that trims him and he can't understand where the trouble lies. You should use rubber boots or rubber bottom

shoes in trapping wolves or coyotes. When one is caught, never reset the same trap for another one for it is pretty apt to have a little blood on it. Pull it and reset a clean one, take the one you have lifted home and put it through your cleaning process again before resetting it. In carrying my traps I use a pack basket as shown in some of my illustrations. Keep it clean and use it for no other purpose.

Now we have our scent and traps clean, another most important thing is to make a proper set, one that will look natural and rigged in a way so that the wolf will step into it every time.

I have often heard amateur trappers on returning from their trap line remark, "I came very near getting a wolf or fox this morning. One stepped right on the jaws of my trap." This trapper is well on the road to success. His scent was good, his trap was odorless from steel or human odor, his set was undetected by the animal. But there was something lacking. The trap was not rigged and set in the right place to make the wolf step into it. This experience an old timer seldom if ever has.

In making a set do not try to crowd a wolf into a narrow place. Put a few drops of your scent on a small dry stick or dry cow pad. Lay it up against a bunch of grass, cactus, sage brush or the roots of a stump. Always put it on the side where the best opening is, for the wolf likes plenty of room at all times.

About seventeen inches back from the scent dig out a hole to fit the trap in the sand or dirt. Rotten dirt from wood is a favorite place to make your set. In Texas, New Mexico or Arizona sand is preferred. After your trap is placed take about three or four pieces of thin paper and lay them from jaw to pan. Do not use one large piece to cover as the pan does not give way freely. Large flat leaves are preferred to paper. Now take the dirt you have dug out in between your gloved hand and rub or sift a thin layer of dirt over the trap until the paper or leaves are thoroughly covered. Now your set is made.

How are we going to be sure that the wolf will step on the pan of the trap when he walks up to sniff the scent? This is a very important thing to know. The wolf is a very easy animal to guide as the least little twig or weed will

turn him. Now take a tiny dead twig or weed such as would be around the set and stick down one on each side of the jaws of the trap and then a stepping stick should be laid across in a natural way just in front of the trap. The wolf cannot stand back of the stepping stick and get his nose to the scent and by stepping over he is just the right distance to do so. If this is made properly you will never fail to get every wolf that puts his nose to your scent. If this set is made in sand or dry dirt do not leave your foot prints showing, brush them out as you back away from the set with a small brush. Always exercise the greatest care to leave everything in the surroundings looking as natural as before you went there.

Once you get the right idea and are on the right track, you will be surprised at how easy wolves are to trap. I have a few times taken amateur wolf and fur trappers with me on the trap line for a few days, letting them watch me make the sets, explaining every little detail to them as I went along. Then I have turned them loose alone and to my great surprise seen them bring in a number of fox and coyote the first week.

Never reset a trap for wolf, coyote or fox where you have killed one if you have bled them around there. They are very suspicious of the blood of their kin. It is almost impossible to trap them on snow unless you are in the north countries where the snow remains for some time in a dry condition. Where the snows are damp, freezing and thawing, you can't do much. Those who trap in the cold climate should make their sets when possible in a snow storm. You are apt to get too much snow and your work must be done over again. Wolves are sometimes afraid of snowshoe track.

No doubt all that read my instructions on the wolf have in their life heard old settlers tell of narrow escapes their forefathers had from being attacked by a band of wolves. In my estimation this is all bosh. Once I heard an old settler tell about wolves attacking him. I never relied much on one of his yarns after that. I find the wolf (both the timber and prairie) to be the most cowardly animal living when he sees a man.

Once while on my trap line in Old Mexico I was walking along where the sage brush and

century plant was scattered. Some two hundred yards ahead of me I saw two coyotes running around in a small circle, one behind the other. After slipping up as close as I dared I sat down where I could rest my rifle between my knees. I then whistled. They both stopped and I took a deadly aim at one and eased off the trigger. One of them dropped dead and from the way the other was travelling when I last saw him I don't believe he stopped until he got out of the country.

I went up to get the dead one and there laid in the grass asleep a young calf which I don't believe was two days old. Those coyotes were too cowardly to attack that little calf while it was lying still. They were trying to make it get up and run before they would kill it.

I think one reason so many people consider the wolf dangerous is because of that frightening hair-raising howl of his. This howl can be heard for five miles on a still night. When two or more set up that coarse long howl they will sound like more than a dozen and to any one that is not used to hearing it, it will certainly make his hair raise.

The coyote has a finer yap that does not resemble that of the timber wolf in the least. There is something about the fearful howl that every trapper likes. I have never night hunted with a man who would not stop on hearing the first howl and drop everything and just listen until the sound of the last notes died away. (It makes me homesick to write about it.)

CHAPTER II

Habits of Fur Bearers

BEFORE you can become an expert in the fascinating art of trapping you must thoroughly understand the habits and nature of the animals you are going to trap. To master this takes time, labor, hardships, and patience. You must know each animal's ways, signs, the food he likes, and you must be able to recognize his tracks and other signs and places he loves to visit; his ups and downs, back and forth to the water, and why he goes there. You may from experienced trappers learn how to make perfect sets and scents. But if you have not learned anything about the habits and the ways of the animal you will not know where to put your trap or where to look for his signs. Nor will you be able to recognize them when you see them, and therefore you cannot expect any great success at the game. You must learn, study, labor, experiment. And have patience! To become an expert or professional trapper requires more time, patience and work than any other trade

that I know of. But studying the trapping art, ways and nature of animals is very fascinating and a man will work harder to master trapping than he would any other trade, for he loves every part of it. I have followed the wilderness trap line for twenty-eight years in all parts of the wild country, from the Canadian border of Maine to the California coast, and am constantly working, studying the ways of the animals, experimenting with all kinds of scents, and many ways of making sets. I have captured and tamed most every fur-bearing animal and have spent months with each individual, studying him, his habits, ways and nature and what he loves most for food and scents. The mink, raccoon, muskrat, beaver and otter are water animals or spend a good portion of their time around the water. If you are trapping any of the above mentioned you will want to go to the brooks, rivers, marshes, lakes and ponds to look for their signs. The mink and raccoon will leave the water many times for quite a distance, and the otter will often cut across country from the head of one stream to another, or from a pond or lake to another. But the muskrat and

beaver are strictly water animals. Their entire life is spent around the water, never getting but a few yards away from it. The rat will venture farther away from it than the beaver.

The fox, wolf, opossum, skunk, wild cat, lynx and badger are known as the dry land animals. None of them like the water and they will not go into it unless they are forced to do so, or unless swimming is their only means of crossing a stream. Then they will want to cross pretty badly before they will swim.

CHAPTER III

The Muskrat

THIS valuable little animal is found in nearly all parts of the United States, from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast. They are a water animal and are found along most streams of all sizes and among marshes, ponds and lakes in all parts of the country. But they are most abundant in the southern states, along the Mississippi and in the Louisiana marshes. They are also trapped in large quantities in many of the New England states. Southern Maine yields a large supply of skins yearly. They multiply very rapidly, having several litters of young yearly. The little ones are born blind, naked, and helpless, and number from five to twelve to a litter. This rapid breeding has enabled the muskrat to hold his own through years of steady trapping.

They are still found in practically all their original ranges, and yield a large supply of valuable fur each season. In 1914 more than 10,000,000 of their skins were sold in London and other millions were handled in the

United States. The quantity has caused this little animal to be our most valuable fur bearer. They are the leading fur in number of pelts and value. In the year 1925 approximately 3,000,000 skins were sold at an average price of $2.00 each. Muskrat skins of the best quality can be used for imitating the fur of the seal. The farmer, his boy, and all settlement trappers reap more dollars and cents from the muskrat than any other fur bearer. This is due to the quantity of them and to their being very simple and easy to trap. Along the streams and rivers they live in the banks, entering a hole in the ground at the water's bottom from one to five feet from the bank which runs back under the bank and then up above the water level. He never has the hole leading to his den above water. I have often seen the water go down and leave his hole dry. In this case he would plug it up with grass, seaweed and mud, and make another hole still lower in the water leading to his house. The muskrat skin does not prime very early in the fall. Like the beaver he is about the last animal to become primed in the winter. Therefore he should not be trapped very

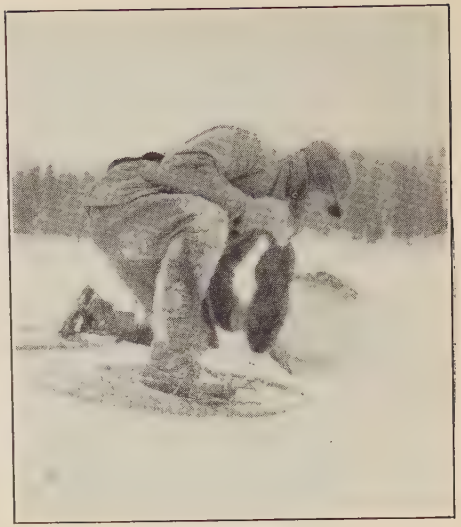
early in the season. If you want to trap them during the winter months, you may take a canoe, go over your marsh, dead water or stream, locate all these holes leading to the houses or bank and stick up a long stick by the side of the hole to locate it. Then when the ice and snow comes and your rat becomes prime you can go along, shovel away the snow and chop a hole through the ice, roll up your sleeve and poke your trap down into the mouth of the hole, and you will get your rat every night until you clean them out of that particular place.

You must watch your game laws as this is unlawful in some states.

You lose no rats when trapping this way. The hole in the ice that you cut through quickly freezes again and when your rat becomes caught drowns immediately and this saves the animal much suffering.

You will find it pretty cold on the hand and arm when putting it down into the ice water at first, but you soon become hardened to it. I am laying out this method for the trapper of the north and cold countries. It is of no use to the southern trapper.

The author cashing in on the muskrat



Taking a muskrat

One of the writer's outlying camps along his trapline in Northern Maine. Just a little snow

The muskrat in the swamps, marshes, and shallow ponds build mound-shape houses, three or four feet high with the base usually in shallow water. I have often seen them six feet or more at the base. These houses are made of roots, mud, eel grass, cattails and so forth. These are mostly used for winter quarters. The rat enters them the same as the bank dens—under water, never from the top. At the entrance of these places is a very fine place to put your trap, if the game laws do not prohibit trapping near a muskrat house.

If you are trapping a large marsh where there are a lot of these houses you can figure on finding quite a large number of rats there. If the marsh is shallow you will see runs leading from one house to another through weeds and grass and from the houses to feeding places. In these runs, if the water is not too deep, is a fine place to set your trap. You can trap them in these runs under the ice if you have them located and marked so you can locate them after the snow comes. The muskrat is to a certain extent a vegetarian. He lives on roots, grass, weeds, and is very fond

of apples, carrots, and parsnips. But when such food is not plentiful he will eat clams and the bark of small twigs. When you see where the rat has been climbing up the bank in search of food, take a piece of apple or carrot and stick it on the end of a stick, then stick it into the bank about six inches above water. Set your trap two or three inches under water, put up a twig or two on each side of your bait so he will have to pass over your trap to get to the bait. Then you are sure to get him. Always have your chain staked out into deep water as far as possible so the rat will drown himself. If you are doing considerable trapping where you have not got much water, you are bound to lose a large number of rats by their twisting out. Here you should use the back breakers. You have to pay a little more for them than for the common trap but it will well pay you to do so for every rat that you lose means the loss of $2.00 or more. Logs often make good sets for the rat. When you find a water soaked log where one end has sunk and the other end is above water it makes a fine place to catch rats. Put your bait on the end of the log, three or four inches

above water. Set your trap on top of the log under water where he climbs on, and when a rat is trapped in such places he most always drowns.

CHAPTER IV

The Otter

THE otter is a water animal, meaning an animal that loves the water. He spends most of his time along streams, lakes, and ponds where fish are plentiful. His diet consists mostly of fish; trout and salmon being his favorite food. In the snow bound country of the north he travels on the snow, and his trail is very easily distinguished from all other animals. He travels by long bounds when the snow has any depth to it. The otter does not clear his body, but simply leaps or shoves with his hind feet and slides. If the country is level or a little down grade, he will slide for several feet before he has to make another leap or push.

The otter is a very cunning and shy animal, and does not like to travel over a long stretch of snow and ice where a quick retreat cannot be found. They love to play safe, as the old saying goes "Safety first." I have seen them travel across country from one stream and hit the head waters of another and follow it

A large otter just cut out from under the ice by the author, and the sled dogs he uses for hauling his traps and provisions

Cruising out the trapline in a midwinter forest

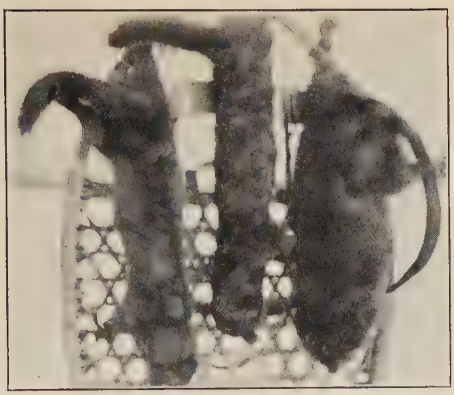
down for miles. He seems to have a great sense of direction and will always leave the river or lake at a point where he has the very shortest distance to cover to reach the next water; at all times traveling under the best cover to be found. He does not like the open, where water cannot be found. He feels that the water is his greatest protection, and it is beyond a doubt. But he is also a great fighter, and it takes a good gritty dog to kill one. Even then he must know how. I have had coon and cat hounds kill them.

One morning last winter while running a long line of traps through a virgin wilderness of Northern Maine, I decided to take along one of my hounds, as I had seen several Canadian lynx tracks the day before. I was snowshoeing along on the ice of a three mile dead water when suddenly I came upon an otter slide or trail. I quickly learned from the way my hound acted that the track was fresh. The mercury had been running to thirty-five and forty below and I knew this otter would have a hard time to find an open place to get into the water. My dog came around in front of me, and I yelled "take 'em." She did not

need the second invitation. She made the bend in the river like an arrow shot from a bow. I shifted into high myself, and was pushing my snowshoes out in front of me for all I was worth, when suddenly I heard the sweet music of my dog's voice floating out through the still air of that bitter cold morning. I came to a halt for a second, and discovered that she was barking in one place. This got me excited, and I put on more speed. When I made the next bend on the crooked dead water, there was old mother otter backed up under the bank fighting off my dog. Every time the otter would start to run the old hound would freeze on to her, and then the otter would fight her loose and again duck under the bank, but she could not get out of sight. As I neared the spot with my revolver in my hand I noticed an otter trail leading on. It came to me in an instant that there was more than one otter, and the other had gone on. I quickly shot the one the dog had stopped, grabbed her up and struck out up the ice yelling to my dog to "go get 'em." She quickly learned what I meant, and took the track. We were now on a long stretch of ice. I looked ahead several

hundred yards and I could see two black animals sliding over the snow, going for their lives. The hound had also spied them and was doing her very best. Here brothers, I witnessed the most interesting race of my life. The otter had only about three hundred yards to go until they reached a large spring, in the side of the bank, that never froze up. There was about $80.00 stretched out on the ice and it depended on whether or not the dog could overtake them before they could reach the spring, as to whether I would cash in on them or not. The otters knew they must reach the open water, and the dog seemed to know she must overtake them before they could do it. The little hound was putting out every ounce of strength and power she had to catch them. I have watched many a horse race in my time but never did I get the kick from one as I did from this otter and dog race. I could see my dog gaining rapidly, but it looked at first almost impossible for her to overtake them. I knew they were getting very close to the open water but they were all so far in lead of me that it was impossible for me to tell just how far in lead of the dog the otter was.

I stopped and stood breathless to see which would win. A sickening feeling run through my body as I saw a spray of water fly. One otter had reached it, but my little bitch came in on the second. She scooped this otter just in time to make a slight turn so as not to go into the water behind the first otter. Here was the bloodiest battle this little hound ever fought in her life. The dog seemed to know that if that otter got loose from her he would dive over-board to safety. They fought like tigers, never once did they break. It took me some time to get up to where the battle was being fought. My dog was bleeding every where. The sharp cat-like teeth had slashed her in many places. One ear was split half way down. I urged my hound on and stood with cocked revolver waiting for an opening to shoot the otter. Suddenly the two animals locked jaws. This gave me a chance to pump a couple of pills into the otter's body, which ended its life. This famous little dog had killed a number of coon, and fought the cat, but never did she get cut up as she did with this otter. While blood flowed from the wounds of the dying otter, it dripped from



A morning's catch from under the ice by the old trapper

A trapped raccoon. You should make your set along the water's edge when possible

Midwinter in the wilderness. A springhole set

the dog's body to the ice. Mrs. Lindbergh was never more proud of her son than I was of this dog.

The two otter skins netted me $70.00. The otter fur is highly prized and always brings a good price in the market. Some call the otter a cousin to the beaver, because he will go far off of his regular route to visit a family of beaver. The otter is much more cunning and trap shy, and where the beaver has become exterminated the otter has been able to hold his own fairly well in localities where shrewd trappers are constantly trapping. They have been persistently hunted and trapped since our pioneer days. That the species should continue to exist, though in much diminished numbers, throughout most of its original range is a striking evidence of its retiring habits, and mental acuteness. The otter will stay around beaver dams where there are always open places for him to get out and in, and then, too, beaver ponds always have a good supply of small trout, which the otter prefers.

When you find a place where the otter has been coming up through, set your trap under the hole, if the water is not over twelve inch-

es deep, he will hit it some times a little deeper, as he puts his hind feet to the bottom to climb out. Once I caught one in eighteen inches of water by the tail. Another good place to make a blind set for him is where he slides over the dam. In warmer countries where there is no snow you will often see the slide down the bank which they have worn very smooth. They are a playful animal and will slide down the same slide many times without stopping, if the water is not too deep. At the foot of one of the slides is an excellent place for a trap. Don't try to set from the shore, but wade into the water with hip boots on and make your set. If the water is too deep use your canoe. If you touch or disturb anything on shore around the slide the otter will never slide down again. In all cases and at all places your sets should be made under water, and then the trap must be covered with mud or water soaked leaves. In some places this is hard to do, but cover it you must if you expect to nail your otter. I never caught more than a dozen otter in my entire life in dry land sets. In making any set for the wise old otter you must leave no human odor around your

set. The otter is hard to take with bait, he prefers to get his own dinner. For scent I take one half pint of trout oil, put in two or three scent sacs from the otter, one-half of a beaver caster, and two oil sacs from the beaver. This makes a wonderful scent. In using it I just put a little on a twig and place it in the bank above water and set my trap under it in six or eight inches of water.

If you are having trouble trying to nail a few wise old otter on your trap line, write to me at Ashland, Maine, the condition of the water and the places you are trying to nail them, and I will give you my best instructions for the asking, as to how to go about outwitting them.

CHAPTER V

The Skunk

WE have in the United States three kinds of skunks. The little spotted skunk, sometimes called civet cat, the common skunk, and the hog-nosed skunk. The civet or the spotted skunk is the smallest of the tribe and his pelt is worth the least. They have about three stripes running from the back of the head, half way down the body, two running cross ways, and spots on the tail-end of his body. All the species have the scent sacs loaded with malodorous fluid which can be thrown with prompt accuracy when disturbed by man or dog. This is the skunk's method of protection. This odor when first discharged is sickening to the dog or person who is not used to it. When the dog gets his first dose he will froth at the mouth and roll in the leaves and grass, trying to get it off of himself. But the old skunk hound and the old trappers pay no attention to the odor whatever. I have killed and skinned thousands of these animals and

the scent does not bother me any more than so much perfume would.

The common skunk is the one with a forked stripe running down his back. Some are all black except for a white spot on the top of the head. They are listed as black, short stripe, narrow stripe and broad stripe. The black ones sell for the most money. The short stripe next and so on down. The hog-nosed skunk is found only in the southwestern states. He grows as large as any of the tribe, is all white on the back and tail. He has a long snout or nose, naked on the top and sides. Evidently he uses it for rooting in the ground for food, similar to a hog. His front feet have long and heavy claws, much larger than the claws of the common skunk. They resemble the claws and feet of the badger. I have often heard them called badger skunk.

There are thousands of dollars reaped every year by the farmer and his sons on skunk fur. The skunk is very simple and easy to trap, not at all trap shy. He will blunder right into your trap when wholly exposed. His food consists of fowl, birds, mice, bugs, grasshoppers, and crickets. He will eat most

any kind of flesh; rabbit, muskrat, and venison make good bait. You will get far greater results by using scents which are made as follows: Take the fat of a skunk, cut it into small pieces, put into a clean quart bottle and hang it out into the sun until it turns into oil. Then add the contents of two or more scent bags of the skunk, put in one-fourth of a teaspoonful asafetida (which can be bought at a drug store) and five drops of oil of anise. When the wind is blowing right a skunk can smell this for more than a mile and will always come to it.

The skunk prefers the settled sections where there is some timber. He loves the farms and will often den up under the farmer's barn or house and will sometimes get into the chicken house and help himself to a hen. The skunk dens in the ground, under bluffs, ledges and in the roots of hollow trees. You can easily tell in the late fall the dens they are living in as you will see where they have been dragging in dead grass and leaves to make their winter nest.

When a place like this has been located you should never dig into it or disturb it. When

open season comes set your trap at the mouth of the den. When you catch a skunk, kill him right there and let him scent the place as much as possible. This will help to draw more to the den. Often several will den together. I have caught as many as fourteen in one hole during one winter. If you destroy a den by digging into it, it will never be of any service to you again. But if you trap all the skunks out and leave it, other skunks will keep visiting it, and you will keep getting a stray one now and then.

A skunk when making a den in the ground will most always make it in the side of a little knoll or on a hillside with some covering around it, sumac bushes or blackberry briers. Along stone walls and fence corners is a good place to look for the dens.

If you are seeing skunk signs or tracks in the sand or dirt and can't locate their dens, make an artificial one by digging a hole the size a skunk would make, fourteen or sixteen inches back in a knoll or on a hill side, and put some skunk scent back into the hole. Set your trap at the entrance and you will get the first one that comes along. Now don't remove

your trap when you catch a skunk for there may be several in this vicinity, and as I have said, where you catch one is a very fine place to catch more.

The skunk is usually prime in most places about the first of November. Like the bear in the cold countries he stays in his den the entire winter, going in when the extreme cold weather sets in and remaining until spring. In the warmer parts of the country (southern and central states), he will come out on warm nights in search of food.

February is their mating season. They do considerable roaming around at this time of the year. But in the cold north they don't begin to get out before the middle of March. If you have a tracking snow during rutting season you can locate a number of dens by following the track of the male skunk, as he will visit every den in the vicinity. The young are born in the spring. There are from four to nine in a litter. The young are more than half grown before they are able to throw the terrible odor in defence.

The skunk pelt should be cased pelt-side out. As he is usually very fat in the fall

when trapped, care should be taken to remove all the flesh and fat from the skin. This can best be done without danger of cutting the skin by taking a large tablespoon. After stretching the skin tight, take the side of the spoon with both hands and scrape the fat off until the hide is smooth as paper. The tail should be split open and the bone removed. Thousands of dollars are lost annually by amateur trappers not knowing how to take proper care of the furs after they are trapped. The one and one-half is a good trap for the skunk, and it is ample strong enough to hold the opossum which is often caught in the skunk trap.

I have heard a good many false tales about how to kill skunks without them scenting. I have tried everything that I even heard or read of, and have given up hope of finding a method. You can blow their head off with a gun and they will throw scent just the same. You can sink them under water and while they are drowning you will see the yellow scent rise to the surface of the water. Some trappers will tell you to hold them in the air by the tail while killing them and they

can't throw the scent. But you better let the other fellow try it if you don't want to smell like a skunk.

There is just one way that I ever found that a skunk could be killed without scenting and that is to break his spine. If you could hit his back bone with a 22 rifle he would not be able to scent. But the fur on his back is heavy and it is just guess work to hit the spine. You will only hit about one out of every five in the right place. If you can come down across the back with a good club hard enough to break his back you have got him safe, but this does not always work as the skunk often sees the club coming and throws scent before it strikes him. If you can manage to get his head covered so he can't see the club coming it will in most cases work.

After you have killed a skunk and he has considerable scent on him and you don't want to get it on your hands or clothing, hang him up in the wind for twenty-four hours, or sink him in running water and the most of it will leave him. Myself, I don't mind it. I don't feel right when I am running a trap line unless I have a good supply on my clothes.

CHAPTER VI

The Mink

THE mink belongs to the weasel family and is one of the most widely known and valuable fur bearers of the family. He is found in all the northern parts of the continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the mouth of the Yukon and Mackenzie rivers to the Gulf coast in the United States.

Some trappers will tell you that he is not trap shy, or a very cunning animal. But if you will always take notice the trapper who talks this way does not get a large number of them. I found the ways and nature of the mink harder to understand than either the fox or wolf, and I am always more sure of catching the cunning fox or wolf when he comes along than I am one of these cunning little mink. I find him in most parts of the country cunning and trap shy, and when making a dry land set I use the same precaution as I would in making a set for a fox, cleaning my trap from steel and human odor and using gloves to make the set. But I never use the

land or snow set when I can get open water to make the set in. I will admit there are times when a mink will act very foolish and go right into a trap that is wholly exposed, but this does not happen very often. I use three kinds of sets—the land, water, and under the ice sets. I always get the smallest catches from the land sets. Years ago old trappers would build a cubby house on the bank and put in a rabbit, partridge, or a piece of venison in the back end of the house and set his trap at the entrance and would catch quite a number of mink. But things have changed since Hector was a pup! As the trappers become more numerous and the country thickly settled and the mink grows much scarcer, they become much more cunning and harder to entice into a trap. Nature seems to provide for this change. I can see a large difference and change myself. I find the mink much more cunning and much harder to get into a trap than twenty years ago, and I now use different methods. If the old-time trappers are going to stay in the ring and expect to make good they must constantly experiment and dope out new methods. At the

The author making a set in a springhole for mink

The author making a mink set

present they must use scents instead of flesh of other animals for bait.

The expert trapper of today uses but very little bait, mostly scent. Here where I am now trapping in the wild section of Maine, I use bait some in November and the first part of December, always setting in water when possible.

Rabbit, partridge, muskrat, fish, and beaver meat all make good bait for the mink. But later on in the winter, say January and February, he will pass it all up. Then, if you are going to make a clean up on them, you must use scent. A very fine scent is made as follows: In the summer months catch some lake trout. Brook trout will do if the lake trout can't be got. Cut them up into small pieces and put them in a fruit jar that has been thoroughly cleaned. Hang this out in the sun, not sealed air tight, until it thoroughly rots. The oil will rise to the top. Then skim off one-half pint, add one-half beaver caster, six muskrat musksacs, and all the scent from the mink that you can get. Every time you get a mink put the scent bag into your bottle. You cannot get too much of it in.

This is as fine a scent as can be made. I have got as high as 125 mink with this in one season. In the south, the mink spends a large portion of his time along the rivers, brooks, and small ponds where there are trout, frogs, and muskrats. The mink feed upon them all, but will leave the water some little distance in search of birds, mice and rabbits. You will never find him far from cover. He always keeps a nearby retreat in view. Small streams with lots of driftwood and hiding places are his favorite localities. He will cover quite a distance in one night. He will travel pretty fast, sometimes for a long distance. Then he may slow down, travelling along the watery edge of a stream, going in and out of every hole he can find and searching under drifts of logs and entering muskrat houses. When he is hungry and has captured a prey, you have to get pretty close to him to scare him away. Once while running a line of traps on Current River in the Ozark Mountains of Missouri, I heard a rabbit squeal only a short distance away. It sounded to be somewhere near where my next trap was set, which I had set the day before under a large cliff near the

edge of the water for opossum. Mr. Cotton Tail had come along and got caught and evidently the mink had arrived just a few moments ahead of me, saw the rabbit in the trap and muckled onto him. I saw the mink killing the rabbit. I picked up a stick and got almost close enough to swat him before he ran. Then he ducked back under the ledge and remained for only a few seconds until out he came, grabbed the rabbit, and began to try to haul him in the hole. This time I made a pass at him and almost got him. He ducked back into the hole. I quickly sharpened a stick, stuck it through the rabbit into the ground, removed the trap from the rabbit and set it along side of it, got back and waited for my mink to get caught. And I did not have to wait long until out he came and landed on the rabbit and got both hind feet snapped into the number 1½ trap. Talk about squealing! They have got everything trimmed for their size in making a loud and frightening noise. I quickly dispatched him and went on down my line, getting eleven mink from my traps that day. This mink was not trap shy nor shy of my scent, nor of my person. Some trappers

would claim after seeing this performance that the mink was not cunning or trap shy, and would fool himself. This same mink might have gone on up the river a little farther and came to a trap that was not properly set and baited with a dead bait and refused to go near it. No animal seems to fear a trap if some other animal is caught in it. I have many a time in my long experience had foxes kill and eat a rabbit (out of my trap) that had been caught before the fox came along. And I will wager a lot of you have had the same experience. The male mink does considerable more travelling than the female does. I have trailed them in a light snow six or eight miles. The female only averages about three miles in a night. On dark rainy days they are often seen travelling along streams. The mink in most cases will travel along the edge of the water and a lot of times in the water where it is shallow. When you can find where shoal water comes up to a steep bank or ledge, here is a very fine place to make a blind set. Set a couple number 1½ traps in about three inches of water next to the bank, then stick up a few twigs from trap out to deep water to steer the

A mink will explore any hole or crevice in a log or in the stream bank. Hence this set

Always wear gloves that are absolutely free from alien scent when setting for the mink

mink over your trap. It is a very good plan to use the number 2 double spring when making such sets, as you often catch raccoon in them and occasionally an otter. But in using them your trap should be set light so it will trip easily, otherwise the weight of the mink would not spring it. When you can find muskrat holes with the top of hole a little above water set your trap in the mouth of them as the mink will always visit such places while passing up or down stream. It is a good idea to put a little mink scent back in the hole. If these muskrat holes are not to be found then make one. Take a sharpened stake and dig out a hole about five inches in diameter back twelve or fourteen inches into the bank. Have the bottom of the hole at the entrance a little below water, set your trap, number 1½ at the mouth of the hole in about two inches of water. Lay a water-soaked leaf over the trap when possible. If you are using bait, bird, pieces of rabbit, fish, or muskrat carcass is good. Push it back into the hole in such a way that it will look as if another mink had dragged it there. And when you catch your first mink take some of the mink musk or

scent from the mink, rub it on a stick, and stick the opposite end in the bank in the back end of the hole and you will get every mink that comes along. You can use sets of this kind in the southern states most all winter long but here in the northern part of Maine the rivers are usually running full in the fall from the fall rains. When the freeze comes, and as the water falls, the ice settles down to it in the middle, but on the banks on both sides the ice lies upon the side of the bank. Brush, wind falls, and driftwood leaves a hollow space between water and the ice where mink and otter can travel at will all winter and they practically live under there, seldom breaking out through the bitter cold when the snow is deep and loose. Here you have got to cut through, and make your set. I usually have my sets already prepared before the high waters or freeze comes and then all there is to do is to put in my bait, or scent, and stick in my trap. If you are unprepared where you want your set made, stake off a "u" shaped pen with dead limbs, and put your bait in the back of pen. Wire it to one of the stakes, rub a little mink scent on the sticks. Set your trap

at the mouth. If you can get another piece of ice somewhere else to lay over the hole, do so. Then shovel a lot of snow over the ice with one of your snowshoes to make it air tight, otherwise your trap will freeze up. If you cannot get the layer of ice as mentioned above use boughs first and then cover with snow. These are called "under the ice sets," and it is about the only successful way of catching mink in the frozen north.

Some trappers build a cubby house on the bank and bough it over well to keep off the snow. But I do not advise this set. In most cases your mink will be under the ice when he comes up or down stream and your trap on top. You can plainly see what kind of a chance you have got catching them with this method. And nine times out of ten he will refuse to go in a set like this for a piece of frozen bait. I have often made blind sets under the ice and caught mink without either bait or scent. I used the same method that you would on the trail set on top.

In the central and southern states the rutting season for the mink is in February. But in the cold north it is almost a month later,

beginning around the first of March. At this time the male is very active, on the go most of the time, and will cover considerable distance in one night. And during this mating season he will seldom if ever take bait. He will, in most cases, pass right by it without even giving it a once over. Now is the time to use your scent. If you are unable to get the ingredients as laid down for preparing the mink scent, use only the scent bags of the mink. Save it all if you are in a good mink country. Every drop is worth $10 to you. There are thousands of boy trappers that have never learned the value of this and simply throw it away. The mother before having her young hides away off of the beaten trail of the male. I have often heard say that the male mink like the tomcat, would kill the young. As to how much truth there is in this I am unable to say. The mother has from five to ten young in a litter. They are born during April or May.

CHAPTER VII

The Bobcat

THE wildcat, bay lynx, and bobcat are all the same animal. Like the panther has several different names, but there is only one specie and they are mostly spoken of as bobcats. He is found in most parts of the United States where there is lots of wild and unsettled country. He is a great traveler, on the go most of the time when the snow is not too deep. He is a blood-thirsty animal, a great killer. It seems to be great sport for him to kill everything he can. Hundreds of times while following their tracks in the snow, I have seen where they would make a kill and leave it without touching a bite of it. On one occasion, while following a track of a bobcat in Northern Maine, I came upon four deer he had killed during his night's travel and had never eaten a bite from any of them. But in these northern countries where the snow is loose and deep, making it difficult for the cat to travel in search of game, he will often go back and feed from dead deer until the con-

ditions become so he can travel and make new kills. He is much different from the fox in regards to his diet. Where the fox likes his meat tainted the cat prefers it fresh and warm. After taking one feed from a deer he leaves it for the fox and bear to finish. The cat does not travel so much in open country as the fox. He prefers cedar swamps, thick, black growth, or rough boggy country. He often travels old logging trails, tote or lumber roads, along the edges of large cedar swamps and in such places as these it is easy to trap them.

The cat also loves to hang around a large bog, where the deer are yarding. Sometimes they will spend several days around these places. In Texas and Old Mexico, they travel along the little brooks that are dry most of the time. You will see their tracks in the sand where they have been going back and forth. They come down from the ledges of the mountains to the level sage brush country in search of rabbits and quail, and on traveling back and forth they will always follow these dry brooks down the canyon, and when I see their tracks in the dry sand where they have

been traveling back and forth, they go on the death list. He gets tangled with the steel the first time he comes along after I make my set. I never let one get by. I know the habits and nature of all the cat tribe from A to Z. I have watched the bobcat work cautiously upon a deer, and once in Old Mexico I watched a panther kill a calf one morning at broad daylight. I was running my trap line up a large canyon where a few head of cattle were grazing. On rounding a little bend in the canyon, I heard a yearling calf let an awful bellow out of him twice, and it sounded distressful. I quickened my steps and on getting around a clump of sage brush I saw the calf lying on its side kicking. The mountain lion had his fangs buried into the throat of the calf and holding on to his prey with both front paws and his tail slowly moving right and left. I was only about twenty paces away. I released the safety from my 250-3000 Savage that I was carrying, knelt down on my knees to watch the performance. The calf kicked for only a few minutes and was dead. The great killer then released his hold and simply stood looking down on his prey,

evidently just thinking. I was afraid to wait any longer for fear he would see me and a few jumps into the brush would make him safe. Slowly and quietly I brought that mighty little pill driver to my face and lined it on his head and unlatched her. The mighty killer dropped, kicked, and rolled beside the dead calf for a few seconds and then lay dead. From the looks of the hoof marks the lion had chased the calf a short distance before he caught him.

Last fall, while running a trap line in Northern Maine, I was following a trail running my line, and I saw a deer feeding ahead of me, and while slipping along slowly to see what kind of a deer it was I noticed a very large bobcat half-squatted and creeping towards the deer. This time I had no gun so I stood motionless and watched to see what would happen. When the cat had gotten within about six paces of his prey the deer evidently smelt him. As he threw his head high in the air he blowed twice. The cat was squatted until his belly touched the ground. The deer bounded away and like lightning the cat leaped after him. It was a close shave

Success! The author and a pair of bobcats that will never kill another deer

Mixin' it with the bobcats. Resetting a number four trap

for the deer. The cat only followed a few jumps until he turned off in a different direction, knowing that he could not catch the deer after he had seen him.

The cat seldom dens up only when they have their young. Then the female hides away from the male in the dense swamps or in the ledges of the mountains. Here she keeps her kittens hidden until they are two-thirds grown, as the male cat will always kill the young cats when they find them. I once was trapping a large Tom in the snow and came to where he had found a kitten, two-thirds grown, eating from a deer carcass. He caught the young cat and killed him and left him lying on the snow.

The bobcat does not increase very rapidly as they only have two or three kittens in a litter and the males often kill them.

The cats, I do not think, have a very keen nose and their sense of smell is not so greatly developed as the fox, wolf or bear. The lion, bobcat, and lynx do not seem to be afraid of human or steel odor, but are trap shy if the trap is not carefully concealed. You should take the same precautions in making sets for

the bobcat or lynx as you would for the coyote or fox, as you many times catch both the coyote and fox in your cat sets. As the scent I use for the cat will attract both fox and wolf to a certain extent, the set should be prepared in the same manner as I have given for the coyote. The following scent is what I use: Take one-half pint of trout oil, one-half of a beaver caster, one beaver's oil sac, which is found alongside of the caster, and ten drops of "oil of catnip," and you will have a scent that a lion, bobcat, or lynx will never pass up without investigating. Try it with your Tom-cat and see how it works. Wherever you catch one of these cats is a good place to get another one, as they will often nose around where they get the scent of the trapped cat.

CHAPTER VIII

The Fox

THE fox as well as the wolf is a very cunning animal to trap. There is perhaps no other animal that is so suspicious of danger, and so continually on guard as he, and in order to trap him with any success one must have some experience and great care must be taken to deceive him.

I have trapped thousands of foxes in my life-time in all parts of the country, from Maine to California, and have also shot a number ahead of hounds. I make more money from trapping the fox every year than I do any of the other fur bearers, and I find him to be my easiest victim, as you will see from some of my illustrations, such as "A Morning's Catch." Once they hit my trap line they must pay a heavy toll.

We have several different kinds of foxes. The red and grey are the most common species in the United States, but there are also the black, silver, white, blue, cross and swift.

My experience has been mostly with the

red and grey. The method I have laid down will take any of the others. The red is the most common in the eastern part of the United States. The grey is common through the central and southern states.

The swift is also found in the southwest. He is small in body and has shorter legs than the red or grey. He is grey on the back, almost the color of a fox squirrel, and around the legs and belly he has a reddish color. He is considered the easiest of the fox family to trap, but very few trappers bother with him as the pelts are worth but little.

The red fox is the most important fur bearer of today. The day is not far off when the trapper must be able to trap the red fox in order to make good on a trap line, as the less cunning animals are becoming scarcer every year in all parts of the United States, due to so many trappers. As the prices of furs climb higher and higher, trappers become more numerous.

The red fox in all parts of the country has been more than able to hold his own. I have found him very plentiful in some localities that I trapped where most every other fur

Skinning out a fox. A skunk and bear are waiting their turn

Sly Reynard pays a heavy toll

bearer was trapped off. I could see these conditions coming several years ago and I stuck on the trail of old Reynard, constantly studying his habits and nature, and experimenting with scents and hundreds of ways and methods of making sets, until I thoroughly mastered fox trapping.

At present there is no other fur bearer whose nature and habits I understand so thoroughly as I do the red fox. I get most every one that comes within smelling distance of my trap. Very few escape death.

The red fox at the present is selling at a fancy price and there are still plenty of them in most all parts of the country. Therefore my advice to the beginner as well as the old-timer is to study the fox to the limit. When you are able to trap him successfully, you will find trapping a big paying business. And you won't have to search over two-thirds of America to find good trapping. You will have it at your door.

The fox is a great rambler, on the go most all the time in most all kinds of weather. About the only time that he looks for shelter is in a heavy rain storm. I have often seen

him keep right on peddling fish through a good snow storm and never stop. That is one other great advantage the fox trapper has. The fox can be trapped when nearly every other fur bearer is lying in. Foxes, like wolves, seldom have dens except when they have their young. When they want rest or sleep they just curl up on the leaves or snow at the roots of a tree or on a stump or log. When rested they get up and strike out, and the next hotel they put up at may be several miles from the last one.

A fox will travel several miles in one night and cover lots of country. But he will seldom leave the country where he was born and raised. Once I caught a red fox in a bob-cat trap out of season. I cut a swallow fork out of his ears and set him adrift. Three years later, while setting out a line of fox traps I stuck in one not twenty feet from where this fox was released from my trap. On my next visit to this trap I had that same fox again. Several other times I have done the same thing and got my fox again within a year or so, five or ten miles from where I let him go.

The fox mating season is in February. The period of gestation is nine weeks. They have from five to nine pups in a litter.

When the young is born the mother fox will den up in ledges, hollow logs, or in the ground. Here she remains, if undisturbed, until the young are large enough to leave the den. Once you visit the den of young the old mother fox will usually remove them on the following night and hide them away in another place.

The fox will eat most any old thing and is at all times hungry. The favorite food is rabbits, partridges, venison, mice or poultry.

Now the first thing I am going to caution you against is trying to catch him with any of the above mentioned food or meat of any kind. Scent is to be used at all times when dealing with Reynard. He is very suspicious of any bait or meat put out by the trapper. I have caught a few with all the above mentioned food, but it requires skill.

The bait must be absolutely free from human odor and placed in a way so it will look to the fox as if some animal killed it and left it there. My advice to all who

want to learn fox trapping is to use scents only.

Wherever the red fox is he shows great mental alertness and capacity to meet the requirements of his surroundings. In New England he steadily persists though the great demand is for red fox fur. The high prices put on his back have got all the trappers out for him. There are thousands of trappers now studying him, experimenting in various ways to learn a method to outwit him, such as hounding him with dogs, using poison and the steel trap, the latter being about the best method to take him.

Many of the fox's amazing wiles to outwit pursuers or to capture his prey give evidence of extraordinary mental power. He has been persistently hunted and trapped in North America since the earliest times, and still yields a royal annual tribute of furs.

The highly prized cross, as well as the precious black, and silver grey foxes, are merely color phases or breaks occurring in litters of the ordinary red animals. The highly prized black skins, especially fine ones, have sold for more than $2,000 each in the

V. E. Lynch (the author) and a fine day's catch of fox and bobcat

The trapline cabin and a fur-lined wall — fox and bobcats

London fur sales. But this reward thus offered has resulted in the development of black fox fur-farms which have been very successful and are fast bringing the prices of their fine pelts lower and lower.

CHAPTER IX

Scents

I USE several different kinds of scent for the wily old reds. I am giving a few of the best. During the summer months catch some trout, cut them up, put into thoroughly cleaned fruit jar, and hang out into the sun until they decay. Then skim off just the oil, say one-half pint; to this add one-half of a beaver caster, six muskrats' musksacs taken from the rat in the spring, two drops of oil of anise.

Another scent is prepared of cat meat, either house cat or bobcat will do. In the summer cut into small pieces, fill a clean half-gallon fruit jar two-thirds full, do not seal tight. Add to this one-half dozen mice, one-half dozen muskrat musksacs. It is very attractive to the fox. Let the muskrat musk become rotten.

Another well-known scent is made as follows: In the summer months kill a skunk, take only the fat, put in a fruit jar until it decays or turns to oil, add to this three musk-

rat scent glands, three field mice, a few drops of oil of anise, and the contents of two skunk scent bags. Do not add the skunk scent until the other has decayed or become rotten.

In using this kind if you are trapping in a section where there are lots of skunks, they will bother your traps very much. But at the present day his fur is valuable and his pelt will well pay you for skinning him, cleaning and resetting your trap.

In preparing any of the above scents (skinning or cutting up the meat or fish) your knife and also your hands should be clean, free from tobacco. I have never seen an expert fox or wolf trapper that used tobacco. You should never take your pack basket, traps, or gloves into a cabin where smoking is practiced, for they will become scented with the smoke, and the work you have put in cleaning your traps will all be useless. The trapper will condemn the scent and method and say it is no good when the fault is all his own.

The fox fears tobacco smoke fully as much as he does the scent of man. Inexperienced trappers have for more than a hundred years

been teaching the fox that tobacco scent is made by man. Ninety-nine trappers out of every one hundred that are trying to trap foxes use tobacco. And almost as large a percentage of sets made will have tobacco smoke left on something around the set in some way.

The trail set for the fox is the simplest way for the amateur to take the fox. He loves to travel trails and old roads and will often follow them within an hour after a human being has gone along without any fear of danger, for he knows the nature of man. He knows it is customary for people to travel it.

But let the man who is a few hours ahead of the fox put down a piece of meat, and watch the performance of old Reynard on arriving near it. You will see he turns on the gas and shifts into high for a long distance.

The trail set for the fox should be made the same way as I have laid down for the wolf.

One great precaution I want to call your attention to is this. When your scent is prepared properly and you are catching foxes with it, never sell or give any of it to amateur trappers in your locality. You are only cut-

ting your throat. For the inexperienced trapper will have the fox educated and wise to the scent in a short time so that the most expert trapper in the world could not get a fox up to this scent after he had a few times visited the unskilled trapper's set.

The amateur trapper will go about making sets without properly concealing or cleaning his trap, and leaving signs and scents of his presence. The fox quickly detects the set and bounds away as fast as he can. After he has visited two or three of these sets he becomes wise and afraid of the scent and even the expert must shift to something different in the line of scent to take the educated lad. I am enclosing a photograph showing the proper way to make a fox set on bare ground. The guide and stepping stick shown in the cut is made too large. The very smallest of weeds or twigs will steer the fox, and also will be less liable to arouse his suspicion. So surely he is suspicious, your chances for catching him at that time decrease ninety per cent. If he smells or sees something not exactly right, he will bound away.

But don't get discouraged. If you have

made a good set leave it there and keep a good distance from it in running your line. He will come back again and maybe venture a little closer the next time. Sometimes he will return four or five times, and finally decide there is nothing wrong and will venture to smell of the scent and he is your fox.

In sand and dirt, from rotten wood and chaff, are favorite places to make your sets. Never try to crowd a fox in a narrow place or under anything. Make your sets in the open.

In looking over a trap line never go any closer than necessary to see if your traps have been disturbed. Take every possible precaution to keep human scent away from your set.

Use the same method for cleaning your traps and making the set as I have described for the wolf. Where you find signs of the fox, track, or droppings, or where he has been traveling old roads or trails, here is a good place to make some sets as the fox is very regular in his habits. He will travel through the same parts again in a few days, and if your sets are properly made you will get him when he makes his next round.

A world known trapper in action. Skinning out a morning's catch of fox and bobcats far back in the wilderness of the frozen north

Dry land set for fox

Homeward bound with a heavy load. These foxes must be thawed out before the pelts are removed

Dry Land Set for Fox

Note the little dead brush placed in a natural way around the opposite side of the set. This is to make the fox come in on the side the trap is on. The O zero shows position where scent should be placed. The X shows where trap should be carefully concealed just inside the stepping stick. The scent is placed far enough so that the fox cannot stand outside the stepping stick and get his nose to it, but by stepping over the stick it will enable him to do so, then he hits the trap. Note the two small dead twigs or weeds stuck into the ground just outside the jaws of the trap, these are to steer his foot to the trap. The hole for the scent should appear as if dug by a mouse, chipmunk or gopher. Dig hole for trap deep enough so that it will set level with the surface of the ground, then take large leaves and lap from jaws to pan until it is thoroughly covered, then cover with rotten dirt from wood or sand or common dirt. Whatever is found where you are preparing the set. When necessary I often carry similar dirt from another place to cover with. This covering should look to the wolf or fox as if it was worked out

of the hole dug by the small animal. Then stick a small twig down into your scent bottle and place it back into the hole.

If you are careful and make this set correctly you will get every fox, wolf or cat that comes along.

CHAPTER X

The Opossum

THE opossum is found in most of the timbered parts of the United States except in the cold northern states. He is most numerous in the southern and central states. He is considered the easiest of all fur bearers to trap, but you have to study and learn his nature and habits before you can successfully trap him.

He is a very queer animal, different from any other that I have trapped or seen.

The young are born in the spring, from six to fifteen at a time. They are born in an embryonic condition, and then transferred to a pocket or pouch located on the outside of the mother's stomach. They become firmly attached to the teats and it is impossible to shake them loose, and if they are pulled loose their little mouths and also the mother's teats will bleed. They are naked when first born. The mother carries them around in this pouch until they grow a coat of fur and become too large for the pouch to hold the big family.

Then they drop loose from the teats, and in a short time are able to take care of themselves.

The opossum is constantly hunted with dogs at night, and makes great sport. His pelt is worth a dollar or two. He has a slow pacing gait and when pursued by hounds, on hearing the yelp of the dogs, will go up the first tree that he comes to. He can climb with almost as much ease as a squirrel. In most cases the hunter climbs the tree and shakes him out for the dog. He offers no resistance or fight, simply curls up and plays dead. The dog gives him a few shakes and leaves him, believing him to be dead when many times he is only slightly hurt. You can carry the opossum all night and he will remain in this condition. This trait gave origin to the familiar term, "Playing 'possum." He will not play dead for all animals. Put a house cat or raccoon in a box with him and see how quickly he will come to life. You will be surprised to see what a fight he can put up. He never offers to fight a dog and seldom a person.

The opossum will eat most any kind of flesh. Poultry is his favorite. Sometimes he

will visit a chicken roost and steal a hen and will start off dragging her (she squalling) for sometime before he finishes her. Many a time when I was a small boy living on the farm in the Ozark Mountains of Missouri my mother awakened me in the night, saying, "Run quick to the hen house, something has got a hen." Barefooted and only dressed in pajamas I would grab the lantern and strike for the hen house. One of my old hounds that had learned what a squalling hen meant would usually beat me there and have the opossum dead when I arrived. A few times it was a skunk instead of a 'possum. Then my clothing would have to be put in the brook for a few days and old Drum, my hound, was not allowed in the house for a week or two afterwards.

The opossum is also very fond of persimmons, wild grapes, and apples, and when very hungry will eat acorns. Like the coon he spends much of his time along the river bottoms, small brooks and hollows where the grapes and persimmons grow. He dens up in ledges, under bluffs, in roots of trees, and, like the raccoon, will often climb a tree and

go in at the top when he can find a hole. You will see his tracks along the river bottoms, in the mud, and on sand bars.

The footprints of the 'possum are easily distinguished from the footprints of any other animal. The toes of his front feet are long and slender and spread out wide apart, and one toe on his hind feet turns out by itself, similar to a mouse-thumb. Every toe shows distinctly the same as in a bird track. He has a long round tail without any hair or fur on it, and often when he is traveling a dusty trail you will see where he has dragged it.

As I stated the 'possum is not at all cunning. He knows nothing whatever about dodging traps and will blunder right into one totally uncovered. But you will be well paid if you exercise care and precaution in making sets for him as I have many times caught mink in sets that I had made for the 'possum, and one mink is worth several 'possum. Around a dead carcass of any kind is a good place to set, and when you find a log across a brook near where you have seen signs of 'possum this is a good place to make a set.

He does not like the water and will not go into it unless he just has to. Set your trap and carefully conceal it where he goes onto the log or where he is likely to step off. You are very apt to get a coon in your set and he is worth more than the opossum. When trapping the opossum it is well to use the number 2 double spring, then if you catch a coon it will hold him.

When you find a 'possum's den set your trap at the entrance and you are sure to get him. Rabbit, quail, duck or birds of any kind make good bait. Warm damp nights are the best to go after him with dogs. He seldom comes out of his den in cold, frosty weather. He will stay in several days if the weather stays cold. You seldom see his tracks in the snow unless it is a damp, warm night. Then if the snow is not too deep he will come out and travel quite a distance before he goes in again. Sometimes he goes back to the same den he came from and other times he goes to another one. Unlike the skunk, seldom do you find more than one in a den. They don't seem to get along together very well. They are apt to have family rows. It is a very good plan

to have a trap set in all good-looking dens, whether or not a 'possum is in it. Every one that comes along is apt to go in and nose around. Skunks often do the same.

CHAPTER XI

The Raccoon

SINCE the days of the first settlers this sly, shy, little animal has managed to survive under constant trapping and hounding with coon dogs. His pelt in some of the northern states has sold as high as fifteen dollars. Many of the first settlers paid their taxes with raccoon hides and exchanged them for clothing and food.

The number of raccoons in North America has diminished considerably in the last few years, due to the high prices paid for the pelt. Enough remains, however, to furnish sport and money for thousands of night hunters and trappers, from the Gulf states to the Canadian border, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast.

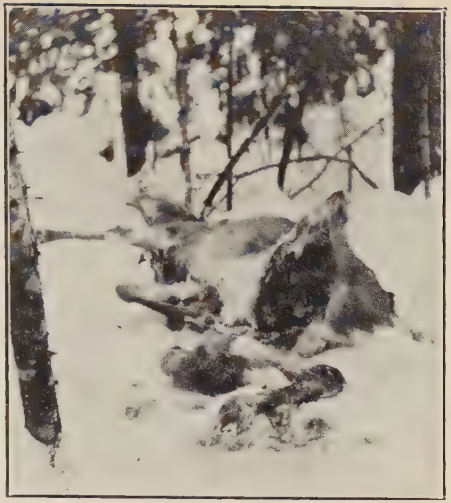
In the farming section where there are streams, lakes, and ponds, the coon is still to be found. But he is more numerous in the southern and Gulf states.

The raccoon's diet consists of clams, fish, frogs, young corn, persimmons, and wild

grapes. I have often seen him visit apple orchards. He is very fond of blueberries and beechnuts, and through the middle west I have known of his eating acorns. In coon hunting with hounds in the Ozark hills I have often had my dogs pick up a hot track far back on the oak ridges, two or three miles from water. Evidently they were feeding on the white oak acorns.

When the old trapper goes out for coon he heads for the river bottoms. It is there where the wild grapes and persimmons are most abundant. The raccoon spends much of his time along small creeks and streams. You will see his tracks on the sand bars and along the mud at the water's edge. He likes to wade along close to the shore in shallow water, from four to eight inches deep, in search of fish and frogs. Such places are mighty good to make a blind set in. You should wear rubber boots in trapping the coon as you can wade out in such places.

If the bank is straight up and down leave an opening of about ten inches next to the bank, then brush from the opening out into deep water. The coon does not like to



A deer killed and partially devoured by bobcats

One of the many killers caught by the author

One of the largest black bears on record caught by the author

Red Reynard has met his master in skill and cunning

travel through brush and will go for the opening every time. Now, if you just have a trap stuck into the opening, he is liable to step over it and not spring your trap. By putting a stepping stick across this opening above water the coon will step over the stick into your trap every time if you have it rigged right. The distance the stick should be above water depends on how deep the water is where your set is. If the water should be ten inches deep he could not step over your stick if it was up very far from the water.

Your trap should be covered with water-soaked leaves if possible. Sometimes a coon is shy of a trap if he sees it even under water. This is the best kind of a blind set. I have got many a sly old raccoon and also mink in these sets. If you have no bank on either side, brush out a little way on shore and then to deep water and leave your opening, make your set, and you will get nearly every coon that comes along.

I have named over most everything in the line of food that the coon is fond of. But I never use any of these for bait. I use scent altogether, and it is made up as follows: In the

summer months catch some trout. (Lake trout are the best as they have more oil.) Cut the guts into small pieces and put in a clean fruit jar, and hang it out in the sun. It does not have to be air tight but tight enough to keep the blow-flies out. Let it hang until the contents thoroughly decay and the oil comes to the top. Then skim off the oil, say a half pint, add to this one-half of a beaver caster, ten drops of oil of anise, and a little honey. The same scent is very fine for the bear and fisher. No raccoon will ever go up or downstream without stopping to investigate the scent.

The water set is always best for coon. Find where he is traveling along the bank in shallow water, take a twig and stick it down in your scent bottle, and stick the other end in the bank, ten or twelve inches above water, and set your trap about where you think his forward feet would be placed in order to reach the scent with his nose. It is well to have a small twig or two on each side of the trap to steer him.

Any kind of hole in the bank above water is a good place to put your scent. Set your trap under water at the mouth of the hole. It is

well to cover the trap with water-soaked leaves where possible. I have found the raccoon in some sections pretty trap shy. If you are trying to trap him on shore your trap should be carefully concealed. In my long experience I have had but very few coons blunder into a trap that was not concealed.

As a rule the coon is not shy of signs made by man, such as newly-cut brush or the foot tracks. But he is quick to detect a trap even under water if it is not covered. He has a very keen eye. Some trappers will tell you that he can't see very well but feels for everything in the line of food. This is not so. He often sees a trap under water and shies around it. Of course, if he sees something shiny, resembling the white belly of a frog or fish, he will pick it up with his front paw to see what it is. As it is impossible for him to smell of anything and detect what it is under water.

The coon does the most of his traveling on warm, damp, or rainy nights. An old coon trapper always expects a good catch on such nights, and the night hunters will always pick cloudy, warm nights to hunt with dogs. On

cold nights the coon does not move much, and in really cold weather he will lie in for several days at a time. He dens in ledges and sometimes in the ground, but in most cases in a hollow tree, going up the outside and in a hole at the top or part of the way up the tree. He seldom dens in the bottom of a tree unless there is no hole at the bottom. He then will go in from above and come down the tree.

He is a great climber and can climb almost any kind of tree. When pursued by hounds, in most cases, he will go up the largest tree he can find. He loves to walk logs and rail fences, and if there is a log across the river he is almost sure to walk it every time he comes along. If you carefully conceal a trap at the end of the log where he steps to get onto it you can often catch him.

I have often read where some trappers recommend setting on a log for a coon, but this is a poor method as there is no way of covering your trap, but what it will look suspicious to him. Of course, in the northern country where you can find moss-covered logs, if you carefully lay the moss back and chop

out a hole with your ax until the trap will set level with the log, then lay the moss back as it was you will get Mr. Coon and often a fox this way, and sometimes a 'possum, as he also loves to walk logs and does not like to swim the stream. I have a few times caught bobcats on a log in a trap that I set for coon this way, but in the south and middle states where coon is most abundant there are no moss-covered logs.

The raccoon is a very powerful animal for his size and the toes of his front feet are somewhat tapering. Therefore, you want a good, strong trap for him or he will pull out, thus making it harder to trap him the second time. I use the number 2 double-spring trap for him. You should have it fixed so they will trip fairly easily, for you often catch mink in a raccoon set, and of course, that wouldn't make you mad as the mink brings more money than the coon. I have also a few times caught otter in sets that I made for the coon.

The coon should be stretched open, split down the middle and stretched as nearly square as possible. Some trappers use sticks and some tack the skins on the wall. The

latter method is the one I use and it is just as good, if not better. The coon in the northern countries is worth by far the most, as he is heavier furred and runs much darker in color.

CHAPTER XII

The Bear

WE have in the United States three kinds of bear, the grizzly of the Rocky Mountains, the brown bear of the western states, and the black bear of the New England states, and most abundant in Northern Maine. Most of my experience has been with the black bear. I have trapped a large number of them, also shot a great many while guiding big-game hunters at my sporting camps in Maine.

In most cases the black bear is not very cunning or trap shy, that is, if he has not had his toes once pinched in a trap. He is very witty and quick to learn, and once he has been in a trap he is very trap shy and it is difficult to get him in the second time. He will often come back and tear in from the back side of your hurdle or bear house and get your bait, not disturbing your trap at the entrance. If he has not previously been caught, he will pay little attention to your trap if you have it concealed.

The bear is a very strong animal for his

size, has great vitality, and is a long ranger. He is on the go most of the time through the spring and summer. If he is striking for another section of the country, I think I am safe in saying that he will travel a hundred miles in twenty-four hours. As I stated he does most of his traveling in the summer and keeps in a lean condition.

As the autumn begins to come on he must put on fat for the winter. He stops roaming so much, only traveling in search of food, which consists of beechnuts, bugs, ants, and most all kinds of meat. He is also very fond of berries, such as raspberries and blueberries, also apples. In the fall when he finds a dead carcass, such as deer or moose, he will often lie right by it for several days until he has it all eaten up before he will look for anything more.

On several occasions I have hung up deer, shot by sportsmen whom I was guiding, and a few days later when we returned for our venison all that would be left would be the hide and maybe the feet. A few times I have found Mr. Bear lying along side of the deer stuffed with venison to his capacity.

A record bear that met the author on his trap line one morning and gave the right of way to the old trapper

The results of three days' hunt by the author and two sportsmen at his camp in Maine, November, 1927

By the time the deep snows and cold weather come he is very fat and ready to hibernate. He digs a den at the roots of a large hollow pine or under the side of a pine log big enough to make a comfortable house and crawls in. He has but very little bedding and prefers mother earth to sleep on. From time to time the snow piles down, covering his den deeper and deeper all winter long. Here he sleeps until spring, without coming out.

When he first leaves his den in the spring is the best time to trap him. He is usually very hungry and will take most any kind of bait. His fur is better at this time of the year than at any other time.

In Northern Maine and Canada he doesn't begin to shed his winter coat until about the middle of June. It is in the spring that he is trapped the most. On coming out of his den he is on the go most all the time, covering lots of territory, and he seems to travel over the same route year after year. After the fir trees begin to peel you will see where the black bear will stand on his hind feet and reach up as far as he can with his teeth and rip off the bark. You will often see the same

tree peeled year after year until it is finally killed. Why he does this I am unable to say. I have heard old timers who thought they were bear trappers argue that he does this in rutting season. But this is not true, for the trees are peeled in the spring and the rutting season is in September.

The bear is considered by most people a dangerous animal, a man-eater. But this is not so. In most cases he will get out of your sight about as quick as any animal that I know of. He is about as hard to catch sight of as any animal that roams the forest. He has a very keen eye, especially for a man moving. His hearing is marvelous, and he has a very keen sense of smell. I know of no other animal that has a keener nose than the bear, and once he gets the sight or scent of man, he is gone and you will never get sight of him again that day. Of course, if the bear is caught in a trap or cornered, he will fight and is a very dangerous animal to get into close quarters with.

In trapping the bear, a bear house or hurdle is built of old logs and brush with a few stakes driven to hold them together. Have the outside well brushed. Have an entrance

on one side large enough for the bear to get through. Set your trap (a number 5 bear trap) at the entrance and conceal it by placing a layer of moss over it, or leaves, depending upon the surroundings.

Fasten your trap to a long pole, six or eight feet long, about four inches in diameter, at the small end, and while trimming it cut the limbs six or eight inches from the body, so in dragging it he will fetch up on everything on his line which will leave a good trail for you to follow.

For bait most any kind of meat—venison, beef, or muskrat carcass. With this I would advise you to use some scent made as follows: Take one-half pint of trout oil and one-half beaver caster, fifteen drops of oil of anise, the half of the contents of one bear's galls, (this is got from the bear), and a little honey. This is one of the best scents that can be made. I have tried it out to my satisfaction on tame bears that I raised and they simply go crazy over it. No bear will ever fail to go into a hurdle with a little of this scent inside.

The hide of the bear is taken off open, like the raccoon's, and stretched as nearly square as

possible, by tacking it on the side of a building shielded from rain and sunshine. The ears of the bear are pretty thick and in warm weather they are apt to spoil if not opened up through the middle from the inside and a little salt sprinkled between the two linings. The toe nails should be left on and the skull saved, as the bear skins are often sold to be made into rugs with head mounted on them.

Bear traps should never be set in the open or in trails, as a man is apt to be caught in them and is very apt to get a broken leg and should he be alone would be apt to lose his life. The game laws in most states prohibit setting a bear trap in the open as it is very dangerous to human lives.

In a country like Northern Maine where there is an abundance of deer, Canadian lynx, and lynx cats, is usually a fine place to trap the bear.

When the deep snows come in the fall or early winter, and it is impossible for the deer to travel through it, they yard up by the thousands in the large cedar swamps. In traveling back and forth on the trails day after day they keep the snow packed down so

it enables them to travel long distances through the swamps, feeding from cedar boughs and moss, from limbs of windfalls and the lower limbs of the trees standing.

Here is where the cats come to do their great slaughtering and to quench their blood-thirstiness. The cats are great killers. They kill many deer just merely for the sake of killing. I have followed them in the snow and found where one cat killed as many as four deer in one night. They seldom if ever go back and feed from a kill, and the deer carcass freezes, and if not eaten by the fox lies here until spring.

Here is the first place the bear strikes out for in coming out of his den, filling his empty stomach with venison from the cat's slaughter. Around the edges of the swamp is the place to do your spring bear trapping. But in the fall the mountain peaks and beechnut ridges are the best place to set your traps. If beechnuts are plentiful, many times the bear will pass up your bait and traps, and then is the time to use your scent.

To catch bear when food is plentiful you must use scent. When you find a trapper who

uses scent, and nothing else for all the animals he traps, nine times out of ten you will find him to be an expert at the game. Many of the cunning animals, such as the coyote, fox, otter, and wolf were trapped in the early days with flesh from other animals for bait. But as the country became thickly settled the fur bearers became much wiser and more cunning to trap. Nature seems to provide for this change, and if the old trapper who once caught his furs with meat bait is going to continue to stay in this great fascinating game and expect to make money, he must change his methods according to the ways nature has brought on.

I began trapping at the age of nine and I began only two years later experimenting with scents and have been at it for twenty-eight years. I have tamed most every fur bearer that we have in the United States for the sake of experimenting with scents until I can put it up for any animal that wears fur on his back. I have also put in as much time experimenting with sets. The best of scents is worthless to you if you cannot make proper sets. This you must not expect to learn in a

week, a month, or a year. Like all other trades it requires considerable time.

If you should start in to learn to be a machinist, electrician, plumber, or carpenter, you would have to begin as an apprentice and put in four years to learn one of these trades. To become an expert trapper, to learn the nature of all the fur bearers, to make proper sets and scents for them all, you have more to learn than you would have to know, to master all four of the above-mentioned occupations.

So brothers, if you are unable to catch a fox or wolf the first week you spend on the trap line, don't become discouraged but keep trying. Study, work, experiment, use good common sense, and you will learn to trim him in the end. There is no animal so cunning or wise that man cannot outwit him if he tries hard to do so.

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